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Inquiries on Korean Influence-Buying Appear Doomed

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WASHINGTON, May 21.—Congressional investigations into Korean influence-buying have foundered in the last few weeks and, barring some unexpected development, appear headed for oblivion.

In separate actions, the House and the Senate have cleared the way for approval of a total of \$1.6 billion in economic and military aid for South Korea despite Seoul's refusal to cooperate with the investigators.

Advocates of continuing the investigations into allegations of bribery and other illicit or unethical behavior had urged that such aid be delayed to force the Korean Government to make available evidence from a former Ambassador, Kim Dong Jo.

But South Korea, citing international agreements, has granted only the most restricted access to Mr. Kim, who is now a special assistant to President Park Chung Hee in Seoul. He is believed to have evidence that Congressmen accepted funds in clear violation of the Constitution.

House to Consider Resolution

The House is scheduled tomorrow to begin considering a resolution asking for Mr. Kim's cooperation, but the fate of the resolution is uncertain. Moreover, Congressional officials said that the House ethics committee, which has been conducting the main inquiry, seems eager to finish the process as quickly and quietly as possible even though the investigative staff led by Leon Jaworski, the special counsel, wants to pursue the investigation.

After 20 months of investigation by the House and 10 months by the Senate, the inquiry has produced evidence that 30 Representatives and former Representatives received money from a Korean agent, as did six Senators and former Senators, three of whom have not been identified.

The Justice Department, after three years of investigation, has obtained the convictions of one former Congressman and one Korean agent and the indictment of another former Congressman and another Korean.

Disciplinary Action Uncertain

Beyond that, neither the House nor the Senate ethics committees have determined what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken against members found to have acted unethically. The House committee has not decided whether it will call Representatives to testify about

their behavior; the Senate committee has neither held nor scheduled any meetings.

Also, neither committee has determined whether it was proper for a member to accept money from Tongsun Park, the most prominent of the alleged Korean agents. Nor have they ruled on the propriety of accepting trips to Korea, entertainment, gifts, honorary degrees and other favors intended to make Congressmen more receptive to Korean persuasion.

The committees have not determined whether, in response to requests from Korean agents, it was ethical for a Congressman to insert a pro-Korean statement into The Congressional Record, to make pro-Korean public appearances or to do favors for Korean officials.

Congressional officials who are informed on the matter said they had seen few signs that any such determinations would be made unless something sparks a revival of interest in the issues.

Tale of Corruption and Greed

Thus, what some expected to explode into a scandal on the order of Watergate seems to have become no more than a awdry affair, full of intrigue, perhaps, but still just a dreary tale of corrupt agents playing on the greed and vanity of politicians.

Even so, the scandal has had at least two serious consequences.

The first is that the reputation of the Congress has been damaged by the flurry of allegations, some shown to be true, a few proven false and many left unresolved.

The reputation of Congress may have been hurt even more by its apparent failure to prove to its critics that it can police itself. Many members of the House ethics committee, for instance, have been quick to condemn Koreans for trying to manipulate American policy but slow to accuse their colleagues of ethical misbehavior.

A second, and ironic, consequence of the scandal has been a deterioration in Korea's alliance with the United States, a relationship Seoul considered so vital as to require the establishment of a covert lobby after the Korean Government's confidence in the United States began slipping from 1968 to 1970.

Millions on Secret Operations

For six years, Seoul spent unknown millions of dollars on operations with such code names as "White Snow" and "Ice Mountain," attempts to convince Congressmen, administration officials, businessmen, scholars and journalists that South Korea deserved the total allegiance of the United States.

From Seoul's point of view, the lobby was largely successful. From 1971 until recently, no American troops were withdrawn from Korea; American military aid continued; Washington was nearly silent on the Korean repression of human rights; many American businessmen and some scholars and journalists became defenders of President Park's autocratic Government.

But the discovery of the lobby and the exposure of its operations have left Korean-American relations in a shambles.

That and the increasing awareness of President Park's dictatorship has eroded the American commitment to Korea's security.

With all the investigation and publicity, however, few political careers have been affected, partly because many of the Congressmen whose names have been mentioned are no longer in office.

McFall May Be Biggest Victim

Among the sitting members, Representative John J. McFall, Democrat of California, was probably the biggest victim. He lost a bid to become Majority Leader, in part because he had accepted questionable funds from Tongsun Park.

Some junior Democrats feared that their party would suffer in the elections next fall because the names of senior Democrats had been connected with the scandal. But even the Republicans say that threat has passed.

New ethics legislation in the House appears to have been influenced only marginally by the Korean affair, and the scandal has produced few calls for tighter enforcement of foreign lobbying regulations.

Surely the most important of the Ko-

reans' targets was the House, which got far more attention than the Senate, even though the Senate is constitutionally more concerned with foreign policy.

House Originates Money Bills

The reason was money. The House originates money bills, including the appropriations for the economic and military aid the Korean Government sought. Beyond that, Representatives were among Tongsun Park's friends. Ambassador Kim Dong Jo, said to have been among the best-informed diplomats in Washington, was on particularly good terms with Carl Albert, a Oklahoma Democrat who was then the Speaker, and other leaders.

From 1969 to 1976, Tongsun Park earned \$9.2 million in rice commissions, of which he says he gave \$850,000 to Representatives and \$21,500 to Senators. But it would be an accountant's nightmare to distinguish between his business spending and his lobbying expenses.

Mr. Park's big payments seemed to have been primarily connected with his businesses. They included \$260,000 to former Representative Richard T. Hanna, a California Democrat who has been con-

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victed of conspiracy, and \$247,000 to former Representative Otto E. Passman, a Democrat from Louisiana who has been indicted on similar charges.

According to Mr. Park's testimony, there were payments of \$221,000 to former Representative Cornelius E. Gallagher, Democrat of New Jersey; \$25,000 to former Representative Edwin W. Edwards, Democrat of Louisiana, now governor of that state; and \$5,000 to Representative John B. Breaux, Democrat of Louisiana. Only Mr. Breaux has denied taking the money.

Political Motivation Seen

Other payments seemed to have been politically motivated. Members of the powerful Appropriations Committee who got contributions from Tongsun Park included former Representative William E. Minshall, Republican of Ohio, who got \$31,500; former Representative Nick Galifianakis, Democrat of North Carolina, who got \$10,500; Mr. McFall, who got \$4,000, and the late Representative John J. Rooney, Democrat of Brooklyn, who got \$4,000.

Still others in the same pattern were Representative Edward J. Patten, Demo-

crat of New Jersey, who got \$3,500, and Representative Edward R. Roybal, Democrat of California, who got \$1,000. Former Representative Seymour Halpern, Republican of Jamaica and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, also got \$1,000.

Tongsun Park appeared to have had particular reasons for other contributions. Representative John Brademas, Democrat of Indiana and a personal friend of Mr. Park, received \$5,250 that he says was properly reported. Former Representative Albert W. Johnson, Republican of Pennsylvania, received \$1,000 a month after he submitted a pro-Korean statement to a House subcommittee. Representative Charles H. Wilson, Democrat of California, got \$1,000 upon his marriage to a Korean woman.

But Mr. Park spent the larger part of the \$9.2 million on elegant living and extravagant entertainment. He gave sumptuous parties that the South Korean Government helped to finance in his luxurious home, in the George Town Club, which he operated, and elsewhere around Washington. Two parties for the Speaker, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., cost \$6,000 alone.

Perhaps the most effective tool in the Korean lobby's kit was what Seoul called "invitation diplomacy." It was an all-out effort to get as many Congressmen as possible to visit South Korea to be shown

the North Korean threat, South Korea's economic progress and a romping good time. American taxpayers paid for most of the transportation, but the South Korean Government spent unknown amounts on their guests in Seoul.

Seoul Reiterates Stand

SEOUL, South Korea, May 21 (UPI)—Foreign Minister Park Tong Jin today indicated that South Korea is prepared to block any attempt by Congress to have former Ambassador Kim Dong Jo testify in connection with alleged Capitol Hill influence-buying.

"Our position is that we oppose any formula which takes the form of investigation," Mr. Park said in an interview with the Hankook Ilbo, a Korean newspaper.

210 Inmates to Get Degrees

WALLA WALLA, Wash., May 21 (AP)—A record 210 inmates are expected to receive degrees at ceremonies June 9 at Washington State Penitentiary. Len Williams, institution principal, said 4 inmates would receive bachelor's degrees in general studies from Washington State University, 81 would get two-year degrees from Walla Walla Community College and 125 would get high school equivalency certificates.